

**MINUTES
MCKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION (MBRF)
RESEARCH COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL
January 29, 2024**

The Research Committee of the MBRF was called to order at 5:30 pm EST on January 29, 2024, by Dr. Madhav Thambisetty.

The following members were present:

Dr. Madhav Thambisetty, Chair of the Research Committee, Trustee
Dr. Mike Dockery, MBRF Chair
Dr. Roy Hamilton, Trustee

The following members were absent:

Dr. Patricia Boyle, Trustee
Dr. Sue Pekarske, Trustee

Others attending:

Dr. Lee Dockery, Chair Emeritus
Ms. Melanie Cianciotto, Corporate Trustee
Dr. Angelika Schlanger, Executive Director

1. Call to Order

Dr. Thambisetty welcomed the members of the committee to the call.

2. Minutes of the September 20, 2023 Meeting

The minutes of the September 20, 2023, Research Committee Meeting (Attachment 1) were approved as amended.

The changes were:

5 a. third paragraph – add “of” before “high quality”

5 b. first sentence – add a space before (Attachment 6)

Action Item 1: The minutes of the September 20, 2023, Research Committee Meeting were approved as amended (Attachment 1).

3. Updated Activity Timeline

The committee reviewed the updated Activity Timeline (Attachment 2) for information.

4. MBI Leadership Council's Proposal

The committee reviewed the Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention (CAMI) Core Pilot Grant Program proposal (Attachment 3). The proposal was submitted by Dr. Sara Burke on behalf of the Leadership Council and represents a consensus plan to revitalize and organize a robust, sustainable CAMI Core Pilot Program.

The committee discussed the proposal at length and appreciates the significant progress that has been made toward developing a sustainable infrastructure and strategy that would revitalize the Pilot Grant program and reconstitute the CAMI Core. The committee's main concerns revolved around strong and continuous leadership for the program, as well as having champions at each MBI to ensure that the program is being promoted to increase the number and quality of applications.

The committee requested the proposal be revised and resubmitted to address the following questions/comments:

- Since the Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention (CAMI) Core proposal was approved in 2016, the trustees request a reaffirmation or suggested modification to the vision statement and core objectives of the CAMI Core Pilot Grant program.
- A shared priority for the Pilot Grant Program is to increase the number and quality of proposals submitted. Please describe, in greater detail, the communications plan to accomplish this goal. Please outline the specific strategies that will be used to ensure that potential applicants are aware of the opportunity and encouraged/motivated to apply.
- The MBRF recommends that members of the CAMI Core be senior faculty. We hope that this criterion can be included in the updated proposal and that the proposed membership of the Core aligns with this direction.
- Concerns were raised that previous recipients of the pilot grant awards may not be experienced enough to evaluate the proposals. Can the composition of the review committee be revised to ensure that all members are senior investigators?
- Due to conflict-of-interest issues, a member of the MBRF board or staff may not serve as the Scientific Review Officer (SRO). Please propose an alternative profile of an individual who can serve in this role.

The committee also deliberated adjusting the budget for the program, citing rising costs of equipment and staffing, and whether basic science applications should be funded at a different

level than clinical or translational projects. Finally, it was suggested that the pilot grant program should be focused on a particular set of focus area(s) each year, as recommended by the CAMI Core.

Dr. Schlanger will draft a response to the Leadership Council sharing the concerns/comments of the committee and request that the proposal be revised and resubmitted.

Action Item 2: Dr. Schlanger will draft a response to the Leadership Council sharing the concerns/comments of the committee and request that the proposal be revised and resubmitted.

5. Current Grants/Programs

a. McKnight Brain Aging Registry (MBAR) Proposal Update

Dr. Schlanger provided an update on the McKnight Brain Aging Registry (MBAR) Proposal. Dr. Kristina Visscher is taking the lead on drafting the proposal for submission to the MBRF in February. However, Dr. Visscher did clarify that her intent is to provide the best infrastructure possible for the resource for others to use in their development of proposals to NIH but does not feel she is the best person to lead those future proposals.

b. MBRF Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss (AFAR)

AFAR is in the process of fielding a survey to identify non-financial forms of institutional commitment. They will gather these findings and share them with their recommendations, alongside their draft renewal proposal, hopefully in time to be reviewed at the March meeting of the MBRF Trustees.

c. MBRF Clinical Translational Research Scholarship in Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss (ABF)

Dr. Schlanger spoke with ABF to get their thoughts on why the applications fell this year, and to explore strategies for increasing engagement in future years, which yielded the ABF NGRG Marketing and Applications Trends Memo (Attachment 4). The memo contains suggestions for increasing engagement and aligned applications.

One recommendation for the 2025 grant cycle is to host an informal webinar for prospective applicants. The webinar could offer an opportunity to educate and excite prospective applicants about the McKnight scholarship opportunities. ABF recommends that this webinar be led by an MBRF Trustee who has reviewed applications in the past, and can speak to the components of a successful application.

The committee approves this recommendation and Dr. Hamilton is willing to participate in the webinar.

Dr. Schlanger also shared that she introduced the MBRF's main contacts at ABF and AFAR. The meeting went well, and the teams will collaborate to cross-promote each other's McKnight funded award mechanisms.

d. Reserve and Resiliency Collaboratory (Workshop #4) Final Report

The committee reviewed the Reserve and Resiliency Collaboratory Workshop # 4 Final Report (Attachment 5) for information. During the workshop, there were separate breakout sessions for human and non-human investigators. These were designed to generate, discuss and define specific research projects that groups of attendees would be interested in working on together. These were then reported back to the entire group in plenary format. This process resulted in eight separate groups of investigators with interests in specific research questions that could be addressed using shared data.

Dr. Stern shared that they are seeking ways to help fund the continuation of these collaborations.

Dr. Thambisetty shared that given the high level of engagement, attendance and the results of the collaboration, the return was well worth the MBRF's financial investment.

6. Adjourn

Dr. Thambisetty asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none, he called for adjournment of the meeting at 6:30 p.m. EST.

Summary of Action Items:

Action Item 1: The minutes of the September 20, 2023, Research Committee Meeting were approved as amended (Attachment 1).

Action Item 2: Dr. Schlanger will draft a response to the Leadership Council sharing the concerns/comments of the committee and request that the proposal be revised and resubmitted.

Respectfully Submitted,



Melanie A. Cianciotto
Corporate Trustee

